

Lawmakers try to make it harder to send some inmates to state hospital

By CONRAD WILSON
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Oregon lawmakers say they're going to amend legislation and make it more difficult for judges to send people to the Oregon State Hospital for psychological evaluation and treatment.

The decision comes a day after a Washington County Circuit Court judge found the state hospital "willfully violated" court orders for not transporting people from the Washington County Jail to the state hospital for treatment within seven days.

Judges can order defendants in criminal cases to be sent to the Oregon State Hospital for psychological evaluation or to be treated until it's determined the person can aid in their own defense.

Mental health advocates and attorneys across the state say there are dozens of people unable to aid in their own defense because of mental illness and are awaiting treatment at the state hospital. They say those people languish in jail, often becoming iller while they wait.

"The current situation

at the Oregon State Hospital is absolutely unacceptable," state House Majority Leader Jennifer Williamson, D-Portland, and state Sen. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene, said in a joint statement on Wednesday. "Failure to properly address this issue has led the state to a perilous point."

The lawmakers, who chair the judiciary committees in their respective chambers, said they plan to "strengthen" legislation in SB 24, which passed the House on Tuesday.

The lawmakers said their changes "will significantly restrict the ability of individuals who go through municipal courts or are charged with misdemeanors to be sent to the state hospital."

The lawmakers also said SB 24 was an attempt to address the same issues Judge D. Charles Bailey highlighted in his contempt ruling.

"It saves the state hospital beds for people who are truly dangerous," Williamson said in an interview with OPB. "It solves the problem only if we fund community mental health providers who can address the needs of people who are accused of violations

and misdemeanors."

Disability Rights Oregon Legal Director Emily Cooper said it's a step in the right direction.

"We should be encouraging local courts to send people to local treatment options when they're found unable to aid and assist in their defense," Cooper said in a statement. "But we also need to make sure that there are local treatment options to send people to. Currently, there's a huge gap."

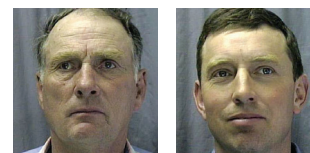
Many counties in Oregon lack mental health services. That means, in some cases, the state hospital is the only place where people can first get a psychological evaluation and then mental health treatment while they move through the criminal justice system.

"Until we create more local mental health care treatment options, we won't be able to create a more humane and effective system for people with mental illness in the criminal justice system," Cooper said.

A 2002 federal court order currently requires defendants who can't assist in their own defense to be admitted to the state hospital within seven days.

Restraining order issued against Hammonds' grazing permit

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press



Dwight Hammond Steven Hammond

PORTLAND — A federal judge has issued a temporary restraining order prohibiting two Oregon ranchers pardoned last year on arson charges from grazing cattle on four federal allotments.

U.S. District Judge Michael Simon ruled on June 4 that environmental groups are likely to prevail on their claim that the federal government violated its own regulations by restoring the grazing permit of Steven and Dwight Hammond of Diamond.

Simon also determined the 28-day restraining order is justified because the environmental plaintiffs — Western Watersheds Project, Center for Biological Diversity and Wildearth Guardians — have shown a substantial likelihood of irreparable harm if cattle are turned out on public land allotments on June 7 and July 1 as planned.

The plaintiffs and the U.S. Interior Department, which oversees the allotments, are expected to engage in further arguments on June 28 regarding a longer-term preliminary injunction against grazing while the lawsuit is pending.

Both men were convicted in 2012 of setting fire to federal land, but were sentenced to, and served, terms less than the five-year minimum sentence required by law.

In 2016, the Hammonds were returned to prison after 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals found they must complete the minimum sentences. Last year, President Donald Trump issued the ranchers full pardons and released them from prison.

Shortly before leaving office in January, former Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke ordered the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to reinstate the Hammonds' grazing permits for four allotments abutting their ranch. The environmental groups filed a lawsuit opposing Zinke's order.

During oral arguments in

levels weren't improper or excessive, according to the government.

The environmental groups argued the Hammonds' grazing permit was restored even though they lacked a "satisfactory record of performance" due to an abrupt decision by Zinke on his last day in office in early 2019. Associated documents were not released to the plaintiffs until grazing had already begun on one of the allotments in April, said David Becker, attorney for the environmental groups.

Authorizing the Hammonds' grazing permit violates federal regulations and will encourage the ranchers to again set fires and otherwise harm the four allotments, which have been recovering during the past five years without grazing, the plaintiffs said.

A temporary restraining order is justified because the plaintiffs are likely to prove the grazing permit was renewed due to the pardons rather than the Hammonds' track record, which is contrary to federal environmental and land management laws, the environmental groups claim.

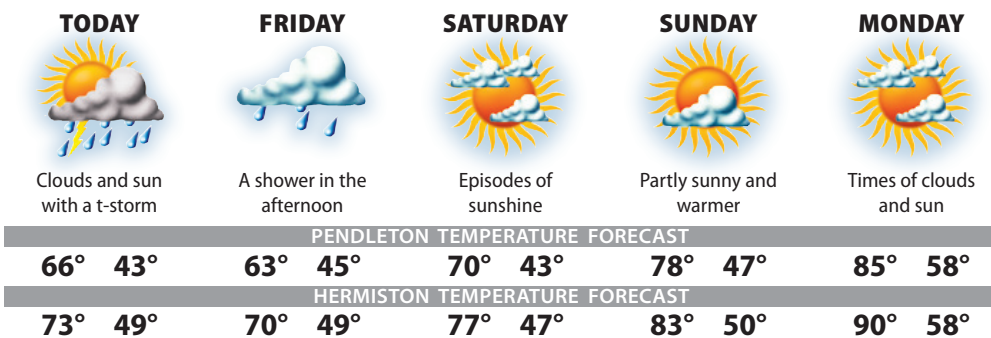
Zinke should also have performed an environmental analysis of renewing the grazing permit instead of "categorically excluding" it from such review, which didn't account for the ecologically important area in which the allotments are located, the plaintiffs said.

Grazing in the allotments will damage sage grouse habitat and streams occupied by redband trout, while the Hammonds won't suffer much financial damage since they can graze cattle elsewhere, as they did before the permit was renewed, according to the environmental groups.

The temporary restraining order against grazing is necessary because June is a critical month for the sage grouse, whose chicks forage near nests and depend on vegetative cover to protect them from predators, Becker said.

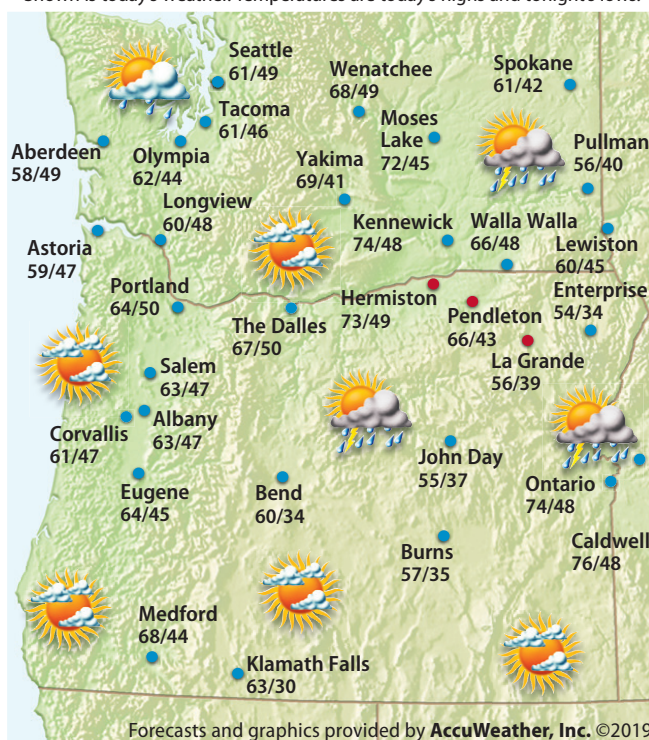
"It increases the likelihood they won't survive," he said.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



ALMANAC

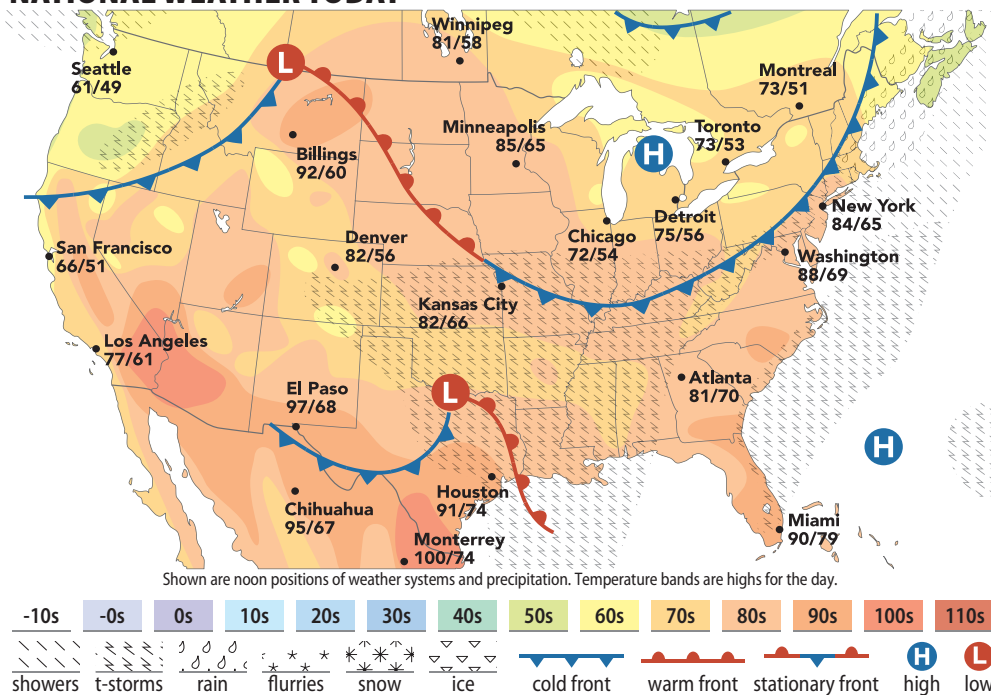
PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	81°	52°	
Normals	75°	51°	
Records	96° (2016)	37° (1910)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	0.00"		
Normal month to date	0.30"		
Year to date	9.28"		
Last year to date	6.07"		
Normal year to date	6.81"		
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	87°	57°	
Normals	77°	51°	
Records	101° (1969)	39° (1976)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	0.00"		
Normal month to date	0.14"		
Year to date	4.42"		
Last year to date	4.96"		
Normal year to date	5.25"		
WINDS (in mph)			
Boardman	Today	Fri.	
Pendleton	WSW 10-20	WSW 12-25	
	WSW 7-14	W 10-20	
SUN AND MOON			
Sunrise today	5:07 a.m.		
Sunset tonight	8:41 p.m.		
Moonrise today	8:23 a.m.		
Moonset today	none		
First	Full	Last	New
June 9	June 17	June 25	July 2

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 108° in Needles, Calif. Low 28° in Gothic, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



BRIEFLY

Oregon Legislature endorses popular vote

SALEM — Oregon is on its way to joining a movement to ignore the Electoral College in favor of the popular vote in presidential elections.

Senate Bill 870 passed the House 37-22 on Wednesday after passing the Senate nearly two months ago. The bill joins Oregon in a group of 15 states supporting the popular vote reflected in ballots cast in the Electoral College. The bill now goes to Gov. Kate Brown, who has supported the popular vote since her time as secretary of state. She will sign it, a spokeswoman said.

With Oregon, the states would control 196 electoral votes. The compact would only go into effect if enough states joined to reach the 270 electoral college votes needed to decide an election.

Another eight states have

passed national popular vote bills through at least one legislative chamber. If all eight states passed it, that would add another 75 votes, according to the movement's website. That would be one more electoral vote than needed.

Oregon police cleared of killing man

PORTLAND (AP) — A grand jury has determined two Oregon police officers were justified in fatally shooting a man who was holding a woman at knifepoint.

KPTV reported Tuesday that Portland Police Bureau Sgt. James Mooney and Officer Michael Gonzalez killed 42-year-old Jeb Collin Brock on April 29.

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office says the grand jury determined the deadly force was "a lawful act of self-defense and/or defense of a

third person." Authorities say a third officer used nonlethal force against Brock when police responded to a report of a stabbing at a Portland home.

Police say four stabbing victims were transported to a hospital.

A 1-year-old child who was in the room during the shooting was later reunited with the mother.

Investigators have not revealed a motive for the stabbings.

Bicyclist killed in Tigard

TIGARD (AP) — Authorities say a bicyclist was killed after crashing with a car in Tigard.

Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue said the crash took place Tuesday just before 8:30 p.m.

KOIN reports the bicyclist was a male. Authorities said the driver of the vehicle stayed at the scene and was cooperating.

CORRECTIONS: The *East Oregonian* works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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